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**AFRICANIZATION OR MODER-
NIZATION? HISTORICAL
ORIGINS OF MODERN
ACADEMICAL EDUCATION IN
AFRICAN INITIATIVE¹**

Christel Adick

Introductory Remarks

The first generation of postcolonial educational development in Africa has been characterized by two tendencies, which seem to contradict each other:

1. A forced expansion of educational institutions on all levels from primary education to university; this implies an acceptance of the so-called "Western" model of schooling;
 2. An Africanization of schooling, which has expressed itself so far mainly in an Africanization of the teaching staff and the curricula, which however, because of the resurgence of traditional African educational practice, has been enacted also with a view towards an Africanization of the school as an educational institution; this implies a distance to the so-called "Western" or modern model of schooling.
- These two educational options: modernization or Africanization, are however not the result of decolonization processes in the last years. They have on the contrary a tradition well over one hundred years within the African discussion on education. And the pros and cons together with the question of the compatibility or non-compatibility of both positions have ever since been tackled by teachers, missions, colonial governments, African educational politicians and education ministries, international education commissions, development experts and others, but have never been ultimately resolved.

There are quite a few (more than one would expect) educationally and politically engaged West Africans of the last century who may be regarded as early representatives of the African contribution to the discussion on the implementation and development of formal education in schools of the so-called "European" model; as for instance Mojola Agbebi, James Johnson, S.R.B. Attoh-Ahuma, Egyir Asaam and others. From among these personalities I have chosen in the following Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) and James Africanus Beale Horton (1835-1883) - especially because their thinking represents up to now the antagonistic option: Africanization or modernization in a most distinct way.

The places of the action referred to are in West Africa, especially in Liberia, Sierra Leone, the former Gold Coast and Lagos, at times also in Europe and in North

America as well as in further West African regions of the so-called "hinterland". Concerning the historical conditions, it has to be stressed that the partitioning of Africa between European colonial powers had not yet taken place and an English colonial doctrine for West Africa had not yet been administered. Only Blyden witnessed the turn from the so-called "laissez-faire"-epoch of free trade ('informal' colonialism) towards the colonial partition of West Africa – but at that time he had already completed a good deal of his life.

In the 19th century West Africa changed its role from an external arena to an integral part of the expansionist capitalist world system. But the political situation was still relatively open in contrast to the later rigid structures of colonial dominance. Schools of the so-called "Western" model had sporadically been in existence since the time of the erection of the first fortified coastal trading stations of the Portuguese. With the decline of the transatlantic slave trade the number of schools began to rise in Sierra Leone, on the Gold Coast and elsewhere in West Africa; and quite a few of these schools were run by Africans or Afro-Americans themselves. In the coastal towns and trading places there existed an educated West African elite, which in the "laissez-faire"-epoch could still develop rather freely because of the above mentioned reasons (absence of colonial structures). Thus some representatives of this coastal elite attained self-reliant and influential positions in commerce, mission, administration and also in the educational sector. In the 19th century they reached high positions, from which they were again prohibited

for racial and colonialistic reasons by about the turn of the century with the consolidation of colonial supremacy, and for which they had to fight again only in the course of decolonization. – So much historical background against which the lives and works of Horton and Blyden have to be seen.

1. James Africanus Beale Horton (1835-1883) and his Suggestion Concerning a Modernization-Orientated West African Educational Policy

1.1. Biographical Background²

James Horton was born on June 1, 1835 as a son of ex-slaves of Ibo-origin in Gloucester at Freetown in Sierra Leone. There he entered the Christian Mission Society's (CMS) mission school and later the CMS Grammar School in Freetown, where he was instructed in subjects like Greek, Latin, mathematics, geography, English, history, Bible studies, astronomy and music. Afterwards he studied at the Fourah Bay Institution of the CMS, which at that time was not yet a university college, for two years in order to become a Christian minister. However, with two other Fourah Bay students he got the chance to study medicine in Great Britain. The English military administration offered scholarships in order to be able to employ West Africans as military doctors on the spot because of the high mortality rate of the Europeans there. Horton studied for five years at King's College in London and acquired the "Membership Examination of the Royal College of Sur-

geons of England" (M.R.C.S.). He then went on to study for one more year in Edinburgh, where he was awarded his Doctor of Medicine degree (MD) with a thesis on the medical topography of West Africa. Afterwards, about the end of 1859, he was ordered to West Africa as an assistant military surgeon, namely to Anomabu on the Gold Coast. In the following years he served in the British military and for some time also as a civil commandant at various English stations in West Africa. In 1875 Horton was promoted to the rank of Surgeon-Major, but in 1880 he retired on half-pay from the British military service with the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. On October 15, 1883 he died at the age of 48 in Freetown.

1.2. Horton's Conception of a Modernization-Orientated West African Educational Policy

In spite of his reputation as a surgeon, natural scientist and author of political ideas, Horton's engagement in educational policy finally was, as July (1966: 8) stresses, a major characteristic of his life. Education in form of the best schools and educational opportunities available world-wide was in his mind the prerequisite and medium for the modernization of Africa. To express it in recent terminology: he considered education the 'motor' of a 'recovering' development presumed to follow the way of the industrializing countries. Horton's unreserved affirmation of modern education from elementary to higher and vocational to university levels was based on a number of motives and assumptions:

1. It implied an acceptance of the technological and scientific progress of Europe which he had come to know during his studies in and further visits to England.
2. It was a reflexion of his own development: School education and university studies had made of him, the son of resettled ex-slaves from Iboland, a well-reputed man whose qualities were also acknowledged by non-racially, philanthropically minded Europeans.
3. Intellectual equality of Blacks and Whites would, at the earliest, be proved on conditions of equal standards of education.
4. If education, in the sense of enlightenment about nature and man's history, had initiated technical-industrial development in Europe, then education in Africa would also become the motor of development.
5. The backwardness of West Africa could be traced back to specific historical and geographic circumstances (relative cultural isolation of West Africa between the Atlantic ocean and the Sahara, effects of the transatlantic slave-trade) and was not due to racial or cultural differences.
6. In view of the then unrivalled English hegemony in the world, cooperation with philanthropic, scientific and Christian circles in England would, according to his philosophy on West African development, serve as a kind of development aid.

For these views Horton has been criticized as a "de-Africanised" African, as being "completely hypnotized by the white man's culture" (Ayandele 1972 b:

172f.) and as the most Westernized representative of the West African coastal elite of the 19th century: "Horton was undoubtedly the most thoroughly culturally conquered of the leading African educationists of nineteenth century West Africa" (Ayandele 1972a: 121). – Nevertheless it would be misleading to treat him merely as a puppet of English cultural imperialism. For at the same time, and not in contradiction to those views, he furthered African interests, development and advancement in economical and social spheres, and political self-determination. He supported the assumption of administrative and management functions by Africans, the literation of African languages; as well as agriculture, mining and banking by African enterprises; public health services staffed by African doctors etc. Modernization and Africanization were no contradictions to him!

Since this article deals with the sphere of higher education, a discussion of Horton's ideas on the general education system, which comprised for instance demands for compulsory education, girls' education, an overall supply of schooling, the literation of African mother tongues, teacher training, state control of education etc., is beyond its scope (cf. the extracts of Horton's writings in Nicol (ed.), 1969: 95–99).

1.3. Horton's Suggestions on a Scientifically-Orientated Higher Education in West Africa

In his publications, as well as in his approaches to and arguments with English administrations, Horton over and over again demanded higher educational opportunities for Africans in Africa itself, namely:

- public, academically-orientated general secondary education (grammar schools, public schools) in all educational districts, e.g. of Sierra Leone (Horton, 1868: 203);
- government-sponsored teacher training seminars in which students would commit themselves to at least 10 years of service in public schools afterwards (ibid.: 203f.);
- a medical college for West Africa, which he preferred to medical studies by Africans in England (as he himself had done) or to an enlarged supply of European personnel, since thus African doctors would stay in their country. Moreover, the training would be less costly and more continual, and such a college could provide better medical research in Africa than in England. This medical teaching and research institution should offer subjects like anatomy, physiology, chemistry, botany (with the addition "of Africa"), natural science, pharmacy and nursing alongside some general 'classical' subjects. The director should, by all means, be an African because he would have a greater interest in the advancement of his country than a European.

Most emphatical, however, was his demand for a University for Western Africa which he had been proposing since 1862 (cf. also Vanderploeg, 1978 and Lynch, 1964). Horton was probably the first West African who raised the demand for a

western-style university in West Africa. His demand resulted from his two basic motives in life: To prove the equal standard of the African against the European paternalistic and racist supremacy, and to modernize Africa technologically, economically and socio-culturally. In this respect it was natural to him to accept European-born ideas and institutions: Natural sciences should not remain a 'European' privilege; they could as well serve African interests! He criticized the Europeans who promised civilization while at the same time denying Africans those institutions of higher learning. He demanded a university which coupled teaching and research, entrusting them to regular professors who would only have to treat two subjects and would be well paid in order to let them concentrate on their work. (Horton on this occasion once hints at the, in his eyes, remarkable position of the professors at German universities, cf. in Nicol (ed.), 1969: 101). He demanded a university syllabus which would surpass, by far, the then available forms of 'higher' education in West Africa, i.e. the prevailing forms of teachers and catechist seminaries. Later he corrected his first suggestion to make Fourah Bay College the proposed university: Its position was not central enough with regard to the West African catchment area; the university should attract as many students as possible and should also make it possible for businessmen to attend certain courses (see in Nicol (ed.), 1969: 101).

In my opinion, Vanderploeg (1978: 193) is right in pointing out that Horton's ideas were politically and educationally radical compared to those of the contemporary British and missionary public: Horton emphasized the state as the agency responsible for the educational system and not missionary agencies and private initiatives in the manner then still dominant in the English educational policy of the mid-19th century. And he started to argue from the point of African interests, which any school and university would have to serve and by which these would ultimately have to be controlled. He mainly thought of natural sciences and technical subjects, but not exclusively, so that he may not easily be criticized because of a technocratic bias. However, one thing his proposed university should surely not become was a Christian missionary higher training institution at England's will and with some traditional 'African' contents. Horton did not plan to Africanize the socio-political development of Africa (like Blyden), but to bring it under African control.

2. Edward Wilmot Blyden (1832-1912) and his African Culturalist Educational Philosophy

2.1. Biographical Background³

Edward Wilmot Blyden was born on August 3, 1832 on the Danish Caribbean island of St. Thomas. His parents were free Blacks, probably of Ibo-origin and educated; his mother was a teacher, his father a tailor. Blyden's attempt in 1850 to be enrolled at Theological Colleges in North America failed because of his skin

colour despite of recommendations by white pastors. This personal experience of racial prejudice nearly made him return to St. Thomas as a desperate person, but finally he accepted an offer by the New York Colonization Society for a free passage to Liberia. (Liberia had just become a free Republic in 1847 under the auspices of Afro-Americans.) Blyden arrived there in January 1851 and enrolled at Alexander High School in Monrovia where he studied subjects like Latin, Greek, geography and mathematics. In 1853 he became a lay preacher and in 1854 a tutor at his school and the deputy school director. In 1858 Blyden was ordained into the Presbyterian Church and became the principal of Alexander High School. In 1861 he was Professor of classical languages (Latin and Greek) at the newly opened Liberia College where he first worked until 1871. Afterwards, because of political difficulties in Liberia, he remained in Sierra Leone for some years. There he founded a newspaper of his own under the title "The Negro", engaged in a movement of African pastors of the CMS agitating for Church autonomy against White supremacy and visited the interior of Sierra Leone as a government representative. In 1873 he returned to Liberia and took over the principalship of Alexander High School for several years and at times also government posts. Between 1880 and 1884 he became the President of Liberia College. In the year 1886 Blyden left the Presbyterian Church (he remained a Christian, however), and in the following years his life was devoted to publishing as well as travels in West Africa (esp. Sierra Leone and Lagos) and in the United States. For a short time he was again active at Liberia College. He left the college several months later due to disputes over the curriculum, and from 1901 to 1906 he accepted the post of the Director of the Department of Islamic Education in Sierra Leone which was offered to him. The rest of his life he mainly spent in Sierra Leone where he died on February 7, 1912.

2.2. Blyden's Attempt at a Cultural Rehabilitation of the Black Race

Blyden's life may be interpreted as an attempt to rehabilitate the Blacks from the effects of enslavement, European domination, and racism and the resulting inferiority complex. He acknowledged the premises of the so-called scientific race theories in Europe about the existence of human races with distinct racial characteristics; he, however, rejected their postulate of a hierarchy of human races in which the Whites ranked quite high and the Blacks very low. Instead he furthered the idea that the human races were of equal value but not of the same kind, and that each race would fulfill specific tasks within the entire human culture.

Blyden imputed distinct character traits to the human races, and many of his ideas and actions can only be understood by referring to his racist conception of culture. (The influences of Blyden's life and work on nationalistic and pan-Africanistic ideas in the following generations are depicted by July (1964), who sees Blyden as a forerunner of Négritude; by Lynch (1965), who shows Blyden as a West African nationalist; and by Lynch (1967, ch. 3, 6 and 9) on Blyden's ideas and actions con-

cerning racial controversies.)

"Blyden portrayed his African as the anti-thesis of the European, and serving to counteract the worst aspects of the influence of the latter. The European character, according to Blyden, was harsh, individualistic, competitive and combative; European society was highly materialistic; the worship of science and industry was replacing that of God. In the character of the African, averred Blyden, was to be found 'the softer aspects of human nature'; cheerfulness, sympathy, willingness to serve, were some of its marked attributes. The special contribution of the African to civilization would be a spiritual one" (Lynch 1967: 61f.).

At first Blyden's aim: "Africa is to be civilized and elevated by Africans" (Blyden, cited in July, 1964: 77) had implied all Africans and persons of African origin. His political experiences with the Mulattoes in America and especially in Liberia, whom he reproached for following only their own interests and privileges instead of the well-being of Africa, finally led him to reject racial mixing and to support the view that only 'pure negroes' could serve their continent. In the end he also denied the Westernized Afro-Americans and ex-slaves to be true representatives of Africa; as such he then only considered the 'natives' who were born and raised in truly African cultures, namely in the Islamized African cultures of the hinterland. He often preferred the cooperation with 'well-minded' Europeans to the Mulattoes or Westernized Africans because, according to Blyden, their stay in Africa would not be for very long due to their high mortality rate. For this very reason, in his later years, he even placed his hopes on a further expansion of the English sphere of influence which in his opinion was a step towards an integration of West Africa, instead of pressing for a reduction or abolition of European intervention (cf. Lynch, 1967, esp. ch. 9 and 10).

For a great deal of his life Blyden was engaged in educational matters. He worked as a teacher and school director; he was a professor for Classics and the President of Liberia College; he was active in educational politics, planning and administration in Liberia, Sierra Leone and Lagos. At the same time, Blyden influenced the Afro-American educational discussion through his contacts with Black personalities and groups in the USA, e.g. the well-known Afro-American educationist Booker T. Washington (cf. Livingston, 1974, ch. 8). Between 1850 and 1895 Blyden travelled to the United States eight times, in the later years not only as a petitioner, but also as a cherished speaker and in order to receive awards. Because of his compromises with the White power systems Blyden (like B.T. Washington) was heavily attacked by more radical Blacks. However Blyden's position finally went far beyond the educational pragmatism of B.T. Washington. Stubbornly adhering to his racial philosophy, Blyden even welcomed the emergence of the doctrine of apartheid in South Africa with its educational segregation policy. This eventually led to the system of today's Bantu education and to similar developments in the USA which in his spirit would have to be considered as 'correct' educational programmes for the Blacks (cf. Livingston, 1975: 198-202).

2.3. Blyden's Conception of an Afro-Centric Higher Education in West Africa

Blyden's main professional fields in research and teaching were languages, history (esp. of antiquity) and theology/philosophy. In these spheres he followed his main motivation to defend African culture against the reproach of the lack of history and culture in Africa. Blyden also tried to transfer his ideas into curricular practice, e.g. by placing emphasis on the history of antiquity and on classical languages in Liberia College namely because he could not find any discriminatory attitudes towards Africans in Homer or Herodot or in the Old Testament. Modern history he censored, however; in his view it could not equal the history of Rome and Greece. Moreover instruction on this epoch which contained the transatlantic slave-trade and the corresponding theories of the inferiority of Blacks, would bear the risk of negatively effecting the self-confidence of African students (Lynch, 1967: 151f.). As a result the curriculum of Liberia College contained Latin, Greek, history (with the above-mentioned stress on antiquity), mathematics, Bible studies and besides this Arabic and a few West African languages which were energetically supported by him. Other subjects like moral philosophy and law were in the planning, but he did not succeed to engage the necessary professors. On the contrary, however, technical and natural science subjects did not appear in the curriculum of 'his' Liberia College.

Despite of all his practical, administrative and theoretical educational occupations Blyden seldom considered neither the daily school routine of small village schools nor educational programmes for the African masses. (A possible exception may only be his commitment to educational opportunities for Muslim Africans in schools which combined Western-secular and Islamic-Arabic education (cf. esp. Livingston, 1975: ch. 7). His educational ideals of a race and culture minded African elite were always expressed within the realms of higher education.

In the 1870's (i.e. some time after Horton's first initiative) Blyden, amongst others, was active in the discussions about an African-controlled university for Western Africa. This finally led to the affiliation of Fourah Bay College in Sierra Leone with the English University of Durham. – What realistic chances were there, more than a century ago, for such a university in the hands of Africans?

- The English governor Pope-Hennessy, known as pro-African-minded, proposed to further the demand with a positive statement to the colonial administrations in London. But he reminded Blyden that the university would have to be organized and, furthermore, financed by the Africans themselves. The Colonial Office, however, did not agree to the plan.
- The educated Creoles of Sierra Leone were divided into two fractions:
 - a) Those who advocated the idea of a secular, African-run university were, despite support by some rich trading families, not in the position and perhaps not politically determined enough to collect the financial means for it. And despite some, e.g. communal legislative rights in Sierra Leone they had no access to national funds from the taxation budget, which might have enabled them to finance the plan.
 - b) The Creoles who were active in the Christian Mission (CMS) were at the

same time entangled in a conflict about the establishment of an independent African church under their leader Pastor James Johnson. The idea of expanding access to, and enlarging the contents (new subjects) of the CMS-run Fourah Bay College was formulated in this conflict.

What was finally reached was a compromise:

- Firstly: Fourah Bay College was opened for all those who fulfilled the entrance requirements – without regard to their religious denominations; it should be equipped with new subjects of study besides the already existing missionary training curriculum – hence a piece of secularization.
- Secondly: Fourah Bay College was affiliated to the University of Durham (like Codrington College in Barbados at the same time) – hence a piece of University education, if, however, not in African hands.

3. Comparison of the Conceptions of Horton and Blyden

Horton and Blyden have often been compared to each other by stressing their divergent positions. In an educational perspective this has been done especially in an article by Fyfe (1970), titled "Horton versus Blyden – An Educational Dilemma", on which I have based some of the following juxtapositions, if not always in the same terminology:

Horton saw Western-style education as a prerequisite for the economic development of Africa (in the sense of an association to the modern world system) which he aspired to: As the Britons had learned from the Romans so Africa would be able to appropriate the economical-technical development of Europe, and this in the best way by education for all, by an enlightening, scientifically orientated transfer of knowledge in schools, by natural sciences and technical instruction in higher education and professionalization, and by a nation-state sponsored modernization programme involving the participation of free citizens.

Blyden viewed education according to the Western model as discriminatory and unsuited to the Black race, whose cultural and spiritual identity he wished to rehabilitate by a distinctly African education. The African, he claimed, must develop along lines suited to the African race and by methods of his own.

Horton's concept implied education as acculturation at the price of losing the African cultural identity; Blyden's concept implied segregation at the price of cultural isolation.

Horton thought of education mainly in terms of qualifications which could be utilized effectively, Blyden mainly in the sense of personality development for the good of the Black race.

Horton argued in an evolutionary-universalistic perspective, Blyden argued in the lines of cultural relativism.

Focussing on the divergence "Horton versus Blyden" alone, however, one tends to overlook their similarities. But it is just these shared assumptions and common basis of their argumentation which is in my opinion most revealing in accounting for the real advance of formal schooling in West Africa, an advance which has to be interpreted as a historically significant step in the overall history of education and instruction in Africa. A step compared to which the political option "Africanization or modernization" comes second in importance.⁴

- Common to them was first of all their overall aim to act in the name of African interests, with Horton especially advocating the political and economic self-determination of Africa and Blyden its cultural identity. Even though they both cooperated with Europe they surely cannot be regarded simply as collaborators with European imperialism.
- Common to them was furthermore their social class bias which made them treat schooling as a 'typically middle-class institution', as we call it today. Neither Horton nor Blyden belonged to the old (traditional kings or feudal aristocratic classes) or the new (commercial bourgeoisie, large capitalist entrepreneurs) West African ruling class. They had nothing else to sell than their 'Western' education, and they had risen socially by nothing else but this same education. Despite Horton's ideas about universal compulsory education and his criticism of African domestic slavery, and despite Blyden's insistence on the special dignity of the 'pure', untouched Africans of the interior, both their educational conceptions reflect the interests of the West African educational elite of the nineteenth century. In comparison to their elaborated propositions and actions for higher education – in what form however – they hardly ever thought about elementary school education, about measures to secure literacy for the masses of the common African population, or about adult education.
- Besides they shared an adherence to a European style of life and an attempt at a self-conscious handling of the possibilities offered by West Africa's incorporation into the modern world system, which none of them was willing to abandon – not even Blyden – and despite numerous open or hidden racial discriminations. International communication opportunities and journeys overseas, social intercourse in sophisticated circles, the applause by an educated, liberal-minded international public and certain amenities of living belonged to their implacable aspirations of life.
- Common to them was finally their general acceptance of formalized instruction from the primary to the university levels of education. One would not have expected otherwise from the Western-minded Horton; but even Blyden with all his Africanization ideology did not dismiss the 'Western' type of schooling in favour of education and instruction along 'African' lines, e.g. in the – however modified – form of autochthonous African educational institutions like the initiation courses of Poro and Sande (Bundu) practised day by day just nearby, or to suggest the Vai-script, about which he knew, for an 'African' school.

Viewed in a wider historical-comparative context, the confrontation between

Horton and Blyden, the antagonism between modernization and Africanization, loses much of its severity. Hence Fyfe's (1970: 33) final comment: "Plainly it is not a question of choice – Horton or Blyden? A balance must be struck between them, and educators have the pleasure of deciding where to strike the balance."

Notes

1. English version of a paper presented at the Conference of the African Studies Association in Germany, held in May 1989 at the University of Bremen. The German version has been published in: *Die Lage der Universitäten: Sektionsbericht*, ed. by W. Küper, Frankfurt 1989, pp. 1-27. I am grateful to Veronika Fuest, Clark Seha and Gretchen Sturham for their help in correcting the draft of my English version.
My occupation with Horton and Blyden originated in connection with my inaugural dissertation, which was generously supported by a scholarship from the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (German Research Society).
2. The following information relies particularly on the works of Ayandele (1972 a, b); Fyfe (1972); July (1966); Nicol, ed., (1969); Vanderploeg (1978) and also on the introductions of the Horton-editions of Shepperson (1969) and Ayandele (1970), which are mentioned in the bibliography.
3. In the Anglophone literature more is known from and about E.W. Blyden than about Horton, since Blyden himself has published much and – because of his longer life – has inspired more generations of African intellectuals and pan-African movements. The following discussion is based on especially July (1964); Livingston (1975); Lynch (1965; 1967), as well as the introduction to the Blyden-edition of Fyfe (1967).
4. For a more elaborate presentation and more detailed literature on this line of argumentation, see my article on "Education in the Modern World System. An Attempt to End the Mythology of the Concept of Education as a Colonial Heritage" in: *Education*, Vol. 40 (1989), pp. 30–48. (The German original has been published in 1988 in the "Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch".)

Bibliographical guide to J.A.B. Horton and E.W. Blyden

(The following list of books and articles by and on Horton and Blyden is certainly not exhaustive. It indicates a selection of those titles which are rather easily accessible. Whereas the Anglophone literature is quite abundant, there is hardly anything to be found in the German language on Horton and Blyden. The author will be publishing a chapter on Horton and Blyden in German, which analyses their lives and works from an educational point of view in the context of a larger theory on the world-wide expansion and universalization of school education within the last two hundred years.)

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